

## Priority Services Group

**Purpose:** On January 11, 1995, President Clinton directed the Office of the Manager, National Communications System (OMNCS) to work with industry and Government to implement a wireless priority service for national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) users. Additionally, on June 29, 2000, he directed the OMNCS to investigate NS/EP issues related to the Internet and associated networks and to clarify the evolving dependence on the Internet for NS/EP mission-critical operations. The OMNCS is also instructed by national policy directives to identify and investigate technologies to assist Federal organizations in fulfilling NS/EP telecommunications objectives. To this end, the Priority Services (PS) group conducts technical analyses, and research and development, focused on identifying wireless and Internet priority service solutions. Technology is influenced through participation in national and international standards organizations.

### Background:

**Wireless:** Cellular telephony is increasingly relied upon for local, State, and Federal NS/EP emergency response. The PS group seeks ways for NS/EP users to overcome blockage in cellular systems when availability is most critical. As requested by the NCS, the FCC adopted rules and requirements for Priority Access Service (PAS) on July 3, 2000. The Report and Order establishes an administrative, operational and regulatory framework for commercial mobile radio service providers to offer PAS to NS/EP personnel on a voluntary basis. The PS group is leading the effort to develop standards-based solutions for provisioning wireless priority access service.

**Internet:** Internet use by Government agencies in support of NS/EP functions is minimal due to its lack of reliability, availability, confidentiality, and priority access. The goal of the PS group's Internet work is to ensure that existing NS/EP priority services are fully considered and integrated in standards being developed and implemented in converged and next generation networks (NGN). In order to satisfy this goal, OMNCS personnel have become active participants in the work of key organizations and standards bodies to increase their awareness of NS/EP requirements. Success in getting NS/EP services integrated into developing standards will result in these services becoming offered through Service Level Agreements; thereby eliminating the need for costly retrofits.

**Emerging Technologies:** The PS group analyzes emerging wireless and Internet technologies to identify improved approaches for Federal entities to fulfill their NS/EP objectives and to ensure that existing NS/EP functionality is incorporated in all aspects of these evolving technologies. Major areas being studied include personal communication services (PCS), wireless data, and third generation (3G) wireless.

### Highlights:

- Developing technical specifications for a nationwide wireless priority service.
- Interfacing with federal and industry entities to influence wireless and Internet developments: Federal Wireless User's Forum; Public Safety Wireless Network; Cellular Telecommunications Internet Association; International Telecommunication Union; Internet Engineering Task Force; Alliance for Telecommunication Industry Solutions; Telecommunications Industry Association.
- Working toward implementation of a wireless priority service across major service providers by 2002.

**Contact Information:** Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Priority Services Group Office. Telephone: (703) 607-6200 ♦ Fax: (703) 607-4830 ♦